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## About FreePint

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter, which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully-formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>>.

## Editorial

How 'usable' is your Web site? I don't mean the quality of the content, I mean how your visitors actually find that content, and move around your Web site.



There is a Suggestion Box on the FreePint Web site. From it we receive a handful of suggestions each week, and recently received this anonymous message:

"Am I the only person who finds the maze of routes to study/access/contact/respond with fellow FreePinters all too confusing?"

The message went on to request clearer ways of finding out what resources are available on the FreePint Web site.

This really prompted us to think hard about the way that people use our site. As a result, we have just made some major improvements.

The biggest enhancement is the set of new pull-down navigation buttons at the top of each page. These make it much easier to navigate to specific parts of the site quickly <<http://www.freepint.com/>>.

In this navigation bar there is also a new 'Network' menu, which enables you to easily jump to other sites in the network, like VIP (information product reviews and news) or Jinfo (jobs database).

The FreePint 'Help Page' has been cleaned up, and there are new 'Sitemap' and 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) pages too.

There are also various smaller improvements to the site, like a new 'Return to top' link under each section of the FreePint Newsletter in the newsletter archive <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/>>.

In today's edition of FreePint we have a very timely article on Web site usability, with pointers to some useful resources. This should help you, as it has helped us, to improve access to the resources that you manage.

We hope you like the improvements to the FreePint Web site; not least the new navigation menus. As you can see, we really do take notice of your suggestions and feedback.

If you have something to say, then please either post it publicly to the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>> or send it anonymously via the Suggestion Box <<http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm>>.

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**Jinfo** -- the best place for information-related job vacancies.

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Find out more today at <http://www.jinfo.com/>

## Jinfo :: Jobs in information

<<http://www.jinfo.com/>>

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job seeking advice. The latest editorial is entitled "So You've Got the Interview".

To read the latest Jinfo Newsletter and to subscribe to receive it twice-monthly by email, visit <<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

### Part-Time Learning Resources Advisor

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3838>>  
Varied roles avail outside London - this one in Scotland, at academic LRC - others in Cardiff, Manchester, Sheffield, and more.  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

### Junior Business Analyst

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3839>>  
To produce company profiles and conduct competitor research, sector overviews and analysis/research of business issues.  
Recruiter: CMS Cameron McKenna

### Senior Researcher (Technology & Telecoms)

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3870>>  
Sector Analyst/Researcher with confidence and high academic standard to be involved in senior level assignments with top London consultancy.  
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 22 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter <<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>> and over 70 in the Jinfo database <<http://www.jinfo.com/>>.

## Discover the ultimate finding tool for European information

European Sources Online is a unique online service offering quick and easy access to the broadest range of information sources focussing on issues affecting the European Union and the wider Europe. ESO offers expert selection and detailed manual indexing of over 300 sources from across Europe and around the world. Access to a large range of specialised, hard-to-find sources. For your free trial visit <<http://www.europeansources.info>>

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## Three reviews in this month's VIP

February's issue of VIP contains the first part of a comparative review of M&A products, together with reviews of Factiva's two new products for sales professionals. Guest comment is from Cillip's Tim Buckley Owen, who considers why legal information professionals are leading the way in terms of pay and status.

<<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>

## Willco :: Hosting email newsletters and forums

The Willco Modules system provides easy management of your membership database, sign-ups to your newsletters, distribution of emails and moderation of online forums.

Willco Modules is used by FreePint, VIP, ResourceShelf and over 50 other organisations in the information world:

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## My Favourite Tipples

by Simon J Hassell

Simon J Hassell is Associate Publisher of AccountancyAgeJobs.com <<http://www.accountancyagejobs.com/>>, which features UK finance and accounting jobs, and ComputingCareers.co.uk <<http://www.computingcareers.co.uk/>>, which features UK IT jobs.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

- Interactive Investor <<http://www.iii.co.uk/>> - News, market data and articles about personal finance and investing in the UK, including stock tips, details of new issues and comparisons of credit card, loans etc.
- Google UK News <<http://www.google.co.uk/news>> - Google UK aggregates news from multiple sources including the BBC and the national and regional newspapers. Useful for a quick summary of the day's news or comparing coverage.
- Reuters <<http://www.reuters.co.uk/>> - News, finance and market information from the famous news agency. Useful free market quotes with graphs, related news headlines and links to company reports.
- All Music <<http://www.allmusic.com/>> - Music resource site for popular and classical music, with details of releases, reviews and a search engine for song titles, albums and artists - all presented in a calm tone.
- New York Times <<http://www.nytimes.com/>> - Useful for an overview of US news and American opinion of world news, including editorials. Also has a guide to New York - ideal for anybody visiting the Big Apple.

### SLA Europe Information Professional Award

Each year Factiva sponsors SLA Europe Information Professional Award (SLA EIP). Nominate yourself or a colleague and win this prestigious award and an all expenses paid trip to the conference in Toronto. Entries by 28th February 2005.

For more details about the EIP award visit: <<http://www.sla-europe.org/>>

### In-depth information management reports from FreePint

We will shortly be adding reports on 'freedom of information' and 'competitive intelligence' to our current range of reports:

- "Information auditing: a guide for information managers"
- "Sharpening Skills; Acquiring Knowledge"
- "E-Newsletters: A Guide for Publishers"
- "Marketing for the Info-Entrepreneur"

Find out more at: <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>

## FreePint Bar

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Rather than wait to read this twice-monthly summary, why not join 14,000 other FreePinters who receive the twice-weekly Bar Digest by email? You can subscribe for free at <<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>>.

Copyright is always a concern for information users, and so can you help someone who wants to reproduce data from a journal article in a different format? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31435>>.

Can you point to any facts and figures on the business news provision industry? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31413>>.

If you want to keep up to date with the latest business information press releases yourself, then subscribe to the free digest for the VIP Wire <<http://www.vivavip.com/order/digest/>>.

A FreePinter is looking for case law relating to property management companies set up to manage small developments with communal areas <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31428>>.

An information student at the FreePint Student Bar would like to know the percentage of students and qualified staff who actually join professional bodies <<http://www.freepint.com/go/s4339>>.

There are now over 40 forthcoming information-related conferences and events listed on the FreePint Events page <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31424>> and the quarterly FreePint Author Update has just been published <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31414>>. The Author Update has suggestions for ways to contribute articles to FreePint, VIP and Jinfo, along with details about authoring a premium report.

Surely there are others who are frustrated about the limitations of Web site visitor statistics reporting? Are there training courses or forums for getting it right? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31433>>.

Or is it possible to find out all the domain names that point to a particular server? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31460>>.

Finally, ResourceShelf <<http://www.ResourceShelf.com>> has been named "Best weblog on searching" by Pandia <<http://www.onopoly.com/press/>>, and the ResourceShelf Newsletter now has direct links to individual items.

William Hann <[william.hann@freepint.com](mailto:william.hann@freepint.com)>  
Managing Editor, FreePint

Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at <<http://web.freepint.com/>>.

## Tips Article

### "Website Usability" By Paula Murdoch



*Paula Murdoch is a Records Manager for Instant Library Limited <<http://www.instant-library.com>> (part of Tribal Group <<http://www.tribalgrou p.co.uk>>) and currently manages a disparate team of information specialists for one of Instant Library's highest calibre clients. During her current tenure, Paula has also contributed enormously to a large-scale office relocation and directed the information solutions that are inextricably linked with this type of project. She began her information career in public libraries before moving to the private sector in early 2002. She is also currently studying part-time for her BA in Information and Library Studies at the University of Central England in Birmingham. Paula is writing for FreePint in a personal capacity.*

How often have you thought: "I'm not using that site again, I hate it!" Often I'd guess. But how often do we consider why we dislike certain sites? One of the reasons could be to do with how usable it is. This article is aimed at newcomers to usability and will attempt to highlight the main issues and approaches to take regarding website usability, testing and design.

#### What is website usability?

Usability, in general, assesses how easy it is to use a product by looking at how efficiently users achieve their goals and how satisfying that process was. Or, put simply, whether it does what the customer expects, does it well and does it quickly. This is the essence of what designers should be striving for.

There are some key concepts for consideration when addressing usability in websites, namely:

- **Functionality:** What is the purpose of the site?
- **Learnability:** How easy is it to learn?
- **Efficiency:** How quickly can users perform tasks?
- **Memorability:** Once learnt, how quickly can someone remember how to use it?
- **Errors:** Does the site design cater for the mistakes users will make?
- **Satisfaction:** Perhaps the most subjective, but worth considering in the design.

These have been taken from the well-known usability expert Jakob Nielsen and his writings can be found at his equally well-known website <<http://www.useit.com/alertbox>>.

#### Good and bad design in usability

In my experience, the best way to learn about usability is to look at some really bad designs! An excellent site for this is the infamous 'Web Pages That Suck' site that was created to supplement a book of the same name written in 1996. The author of both site and book has conveniently written a review of the best of worst design in 2004 available from <<http://digbig.com/4cqrg>>. Richard Eskins has also written on this subject and he provides useful tips on how to design your web pages well <<http://www.freepint.com/go/n66#feature>>.

Essentially though, here's just a tiny slice of what you should be looking out for:

Accessibility is paramount to effective usability for all. I would suggest that accessibility can be split into two main concepts - technical applications and people with disabilities. Much has been written on accessibility from a disabled access point of view, for example, Bill Raschen's

excellent article on web accessibility. <<http://www.freepint.com/go/n169>>.

However, the technical aspects of accessibility should not be overlooked. The size of a user's screen or the speed of internet connection can cause severe accessibility problems especially with the increased use of mobile phone technology and PDAs. Think of children using 'hand-me-down' computers (this is apparently a problem in schools) and you can imagine the impact that inaccessible sites - with slow downloading or excessive scrolling across pages - may have on internet usage. Think also about the colour schemes you choose for colour-blind users or those with dyslexia. A site should also be navigable through the use of the keyboard to aid accessibility, and non-text material (i.e. images) should ideally have a text alternative. Consider the language or cultural issues surrounding your site too.

Sites need a purpose and to help this (and general navigation), the home page should show all major options available on the site. Equally, an obvious link back to the homepage should be shown on all pages. A site map is also a useful addition.

Think about your target audience. Tailor all aspects of the site to them, but bear in mind the people who may visit your site that you are not targeting - does the site cater adequately for these people too?

The text used on the site must be consistent, resizable and written for the medium in which it is displayed, e.g. short, scan-able sections of text.

Links are vital to usability as they can cause huge navigation issues. They need to have meaningful labels and be made obvious. Users also need to know where they will be directed to. Once a user does click a link, it needs to change colour so they know where they've been. Embedded adverts, via links in the text, prove hugely unpopular and may actually hinder navigation. Splash pages and pop-ups, whether advertisements or not, are almost universally ignored and as such are best left out of most aspects of design.

Search options are important on websites, especially larger ones. A bad or very limited search could be a hindrance, for example if the site search cannot cope with obvious spelling differences or plurals.

Finally, all pages of a site should be small in physical size on the page and in the time they take to load. The latest guidelines are that pages must load in less than a second for good usability (See Jakob Nielsen's 'Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design' <<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9605.html>>)

This is by no means an exhaustive list but does give a good introduction to looking at websites from the perspective of usability. For more

information, go to  
<<http://www.usabilitynews.com>> or  
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20030825.html>.

#### Related FreePint links:

- 'Internet Webmaster' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p183>>
- Post a message to the author, Paula Murdoch, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/240205.htm#tips>>\* Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

#### Usability testing - why do it?

If a site proves difficult to use in any way for any person, then you have a usability issue. It may be difficult to acknowledge that a site requires testing; after all, every site makes sense to the person who created it.

With the web growing as fast as it is, the importance of making your site easy to use is becoming evermore important. If there are a plethora of other sites offering the same information, service or product, why should a user struggle to use yours? When considering this in the context of e-commerce, this could mean the difference between a successful business and an expensive mistake. A company in the FTSE 100 cannot afford for their website to score badly. It may also make sense to measure how well your website fulfils user needs by looking at what a direct competitor does, particularly if they are doing a better job.

It is much more difficult to assess the overall satisfaction of a site, for instance the 'look' or 'feel' of it and how pleasant it is to use. User testing can give a broad opinion but this has always been notoriously difficult to measure. So what kinds of tests are there? How do we perform these and make reasonable, unbiased assessments?

#### Types of usability tests

There are many ways to carry out usability testing on your site. A useful starting point is via Usability First: <<http://www.usabilityfirst.com/methods/index.txi>> but there are several other sites that are equally authoritative. Essentially, depending on resources available, you can use evaluation criteria/checklists, field studies, interviews, observation, prototyping, heuristic studies and automated evaluation. This last type of study is about using technology to test technology. Some useful starting points are the free automated tools like Dr HTML <<http://www.fixingyourwebsite.com/drhtml.html>> and others from Optiview <<http://digbig.com/4cpnm>> but again, there are countless other tools available.

In isolation, automated evaluation may not give an entire picture of how usable a site is, but it could be a swift way of testing an early site to remove obvious issues before setting up user testing. It is widely recognised that observation is one of the most effective tests. This is especially true for companies with limited resources, because as long as impartiality is maintained, you can clean highly valuable results from observing people performing specific tasks on your site. Microsoft appears to agree with the notion that user testing is fundamental to usability testing, as they use approximately 750 people in testing both software and websites every month <<http://www.microsoft.com/usability/lab.htm>>.

Remember that testing a new site or a problem site already in existence is not where the story ends. When the changes required have been

implemented, reviews should ideally be maintained.

#### What do I do now?

As Information Professionals, the importance of getting a message across in a clear, accurate and effective way is close to all our hearts. We have seen the ways in which information on a site can be blurred due to inadequate planning and implementation at the design stages and insufficient attention to the factors which influence effective usability.

There is no denying that trying to ensure a website is 100% usable is almost impossible. But there are many authoritative guidelines available today that give site designers the tools to address usability in ways that may not have been considered as little as five years ago. This in itself is an important point as there is certainly still some way to go.

So, what do you do now? Hopefully, this article has provided a basic introduction to why and how you should perform usability testing and has highlighted some of the good and bad in website design. Try using some of the links - another good general resource is Usable Web at <<http://usableweb.com>> - and perhaps the next time you find a site that you decide never to go back to, you might at least learn how not to design a site; I know I do!

#### Reach over 90,000 information professionals

The combined number of subscribers to FreePint, ResourceShelf, VIP and Jinjo is now over 90,000 information researchers worldwide.

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[Provisional]

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- Applying Governance to the Management of Information
- The 9 Ps of Publishing
- Competitive Intelligence
- Quality assuring health information resources
- Business Information in Germany

If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <[penny@freepint.com](mailto:penny@freepint.com)> or sign up for the Author Update at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

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*Caryn Wesner-Early is a librarian who is contracted to the United States Patent Office for database and Web searching.*

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## FreePint Bookshelf

<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>>

### "Online Information Services in the Social Sciences"

Reviewed by Caryn Wesner-Early

This book was originally listed in the FreePint Author Update as simply "Online Information Services." This, it turns out, was a fairly accurate description. The half of the book which deals with setting up, marketing, and managing online information services is very general, and could be used in any course on the subject. What makes it specific to social sciences is the first half, dedicated to case studies of libraries and other services serving a social service clientele. I expect that when this book is used as a textbook, Chapters 12 on will be assigned as class reading, with occasional reference to the preceding eleven chapters of case studies.

For this reason, this book would be an excellent candidate for becoming an e-book. It would be more usable with clickable links within the text to illustrations from the case studies. The extensive link lists in the back of the book, as well as most of the references, would also be more useful that way. (In fact, the core chapters could be used as a general information science text, and links could be keyed to case studies from any specialty.) That said, this book does not really present any usability problems as it is.

Chapters 13-22 provide good guides to topics such as management of online services, marketing, usability, metadata, and so on. They are effective in translating management and computer issues to "library-ese," relating the broader subjects to their narrower library uses gracefully. Other topics with which librarians may be more familiar, such as selection, subject classification, and metadata, are also dealt with clearly and succinctly. Each chapter begins with a definition of the subject, then explains processes involved in it. Some authors have created tables and checklists to make clear the steps in a process or the parts of a task. Throughout the book, main ideas are boiled down to their

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essence and boxed as "Top Tips". Most of these tips don't really stand alone, but if one is leafing through the book looking for useful ideas, they highlight such ideas for further study.

This book should be very popular with professors teaching library courses related to the social sciences, but it could profitably be read by any library school student. It would also be useful to a library planning or starting an online information service, as well as to any new staff hired for such a department.

## FreePint

### Contributors to this issue:

William Hann (FreePint Managing Editor), Penny (FreePint Administrator), Paula Murdoch, Caryn Wesner-Early, Simon Hassell, Helen Clegg, Plain Text <<http://www.plain-text.co.uk/>> (proofreading).

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## What is Jinfo?

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies.

Jinfo is pronounced 'Jin-fo' and is **the** place to find work and advertise jobs in the information industry.

Search the latest jobs at [www.jinfo.com](http://www.jinfo.com)

## Jinfo Newsletter

The Jinfo Newsletter contains advice from recruitment consultants and a list of the latest vacancies in Jinfo.

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- Knowledge Manager
- Senior Research Associate
- Research Librarian

Search the database and find out about advertising vacancies at:

[www.jinfo.com](http://www.jinfo.com)

## Feature Article

### "Recycling - A Growth Industry"

By Helen Clegg

#### Introduction

Did you know that there are over 60 million rats in the UK? That's more than the country's human population. Rats have increased as rubbish has increased. And this isn't just a problem confined to the UK. It's a problem in all industrialized countries and will become one in the developing economies too. One way of reducing the amount of rubbish we produce -- and thus reducing the rat population -- is to recycle.

#### Government information

Governments in industrialized nations have recognized the need for limiting waste production and encouraging the promotion, prevention and recycling of materials. In the EU, there are a number of Council Directives, which can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/s15002.htm>. This is a good starting point for finding out about current European legislation on recycling and waste management. One of the problems with recycling is making this industry more attractive to both companies and citizens. The EU has identified four types of action which could increase the competitiveness of the recycling industry; these can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l28065.htm>

The Environment Portal of the European Commission at <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/index.htm> gives a concise overview of the waste situation in Europe. For detailed statistics on the environment, choose "Resources" from the menu, then "Statistics" - this is a quick way of navigating to the relevant section of the Eurostat website. If you are just interested in UK statistics, go to the Department of the Environment's website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk>. Choose "Environment", "Statistical Topics", then "Waste and Recycling", which will bring you to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/waste/index.htm>. Here you'll find hyperlinks to key facts on household waste and recycling, material recycling and regional recycling and recovery. According to statistics collected by the Department of the Environment, recycling has been growing steadily in the UK since 1983/1984, but still only makes up a fraction of the waste produced by households. For example, in 2002/2003, the average household produced 521 kg of waste during the year, of which a massive 446 kg was not recycled - that's 85.6% of household rubbish which ended up in landfill sites. If you're interested in finding out which types of materials are recycled the most, check out the pie chart depicting material recycling. It shows that in 2002/2003, plastics and textiles made up only 2% of materials that were recycled. When you think about all the plastics bottles and containers purchased by consumers on a daily basis, that's not a lot. Meanwhile, if you want to know which area of the country is the best at recycling, check out the regional

recycling web page. The West Midlands is number one for municipal recycling, yet the South East has the best recycling rate.

For recycling information on the USA, the best place to start is the Environmental Protection Agency <<http://www.epa.gov>>. Click on "Recycling" under "Quick Finder" at the top of the home page to go to the section on recycling. This section provides a short overview, including information on the recycling process, facts and figures, publications on the industry and links to related organizations and associations. The facts and figures section is interesting. For example, in the section on individual state recycling rates, New York, South Carolina and South Dakota all have a rate of over 40%, which is quite high. When it comes to remaining landfill capacity in each state, Tennessee, Alabama and Vermont all have only between five and ten years capacity left, so these states are likely to increase their recycling activities.



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## Gold

- FreePint No.154 19th February 2004. "Electronic Information for Occupational Safety and Health - Challenges for the Information Professional" and "Legal Issues For Information Professionals. How UK Copyright Law Has Changed With The EU Directive" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/190204.htm>
- FreePint No.131 20th February 2003. "France - Business and Economics Sources on the Web" and "Poisons, Potions and Toxins – Toxicology Sources on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/200203.htm>
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- Free Pint No.32, 18th February 1999. "Environmental Information on the Internet" and "New Library: now comes the action" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/180299.htm>
- Free Pint No.8, 19th February 1998. "A New Light on the Horizon" and "Current Awareness Research on the Internet" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/190298.htm>

**Related FreePint links:**

- 'Environment' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p47>>
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- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/240205.htm#feature>>
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**Non-governmental information**

There are lots of non-governmental organizations that collect and disseminate information on recycling. In Europe, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <<http://www.oecd.org>> produces some objective information. Much of the research and papers written on recycling can be quickly found by navigating to the Environment Directorate home page, then searching the sub-site with the keyword "recycling". This search retrieves 78 documents, including one by the International Association of Electronics Recyclers. The paper gives a forecast to the end of 2005 of millions of units recycled, as well as an electronics recycling industry process model. As new product development of electronics products is getting faster, and their lifecycles shorter, recycling of electronic components will likely gain in importance.

ASSURRE <<http://www.assurre.org>> aims to be the leading European association promoting sustainable resource management. This site has some good fact sheets and case studies in pdf format on glass, plastic, paper, aluminium and steel recycling, which you'll find under "Publications". Each fact sheet describes the key environmental benefits, recycling process and gives examples of potential markets for the recycled materials. ACRR, the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling <<http://www.acrr.org>>, is another useful source of information. Under "Prevention and Recycling" the site has a number of documents about waste reduction, sustainable consumption in cities and producer responsibility. Moreover, buried deep in the site are some great facts about recycling. Did you know that recycling one aluminium can saves enough energy to run a 100 watt light bulb for 20 hours, a computer for three hours or a television for two hours? Did you know that if every country recycled as much as Germany does, nearly one third less wood would be needed worldwide to produce paper? And did you know that the energy saving from recycling one glass bottle will power a washing machine for ten minutes? For more of these facts go to <[http://www.acrr.org/resourcities/recycling/recycling\\_did.htm](http://www.acrr.org/resourcities/recycling/recycling_did.htm)>.

Wastewatch <<http://www.wastewatch.org.uk>>, one of the leading UK organizations promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling, also has some wacky waste facts on its website under the information tab, which takes you to <<http://www.wasteonline.org.uk>>. This is where you'll find all the information on waste and recycling. Check out the "Search our library" facility if you're not sure where to find what you're looking for. It's a very simple search tool, divided into themes and filters, current topics and keywords. My search on "reduce, reuse and recycle" retrieved 100 documents including information sheets on battery recycling and tyre recycling.

If you live in the UK and you don't know where your nearest recycling point is, go to <<http://www.recycle-more.com>>, which bills

itself as the one-stop recycling information centre. Click on bank locator, type in your postcode and a map appears with flashing red circles, indicating where your nearest recycling point is! In its "Recycling Specifics" section, this site has some excellent information on the different materials that can be recycled. The sections deal with why recycling is important, facts and useful contacts. For plastics, there's also a useful plastics identification chart to help consumers readily identify the different types of plastic containers.

**Events****United Kingdom:**

- "Creating lasting cultural change through narrative techniques" 3rd - 4th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e413>>
- "Islamic Banking Masterclass" 7th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e414>>
- "Knowledge Management - Where and how will companies achieve the big wins?" 9th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e410>>
- "AUKML Essential Skills for Information Conference 2005" 11th - 13th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e378>>
- "Developing a classification scheme for information and filing Masterclass" 14th - 15th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e415>>
- "Follow my Leader or Taking the Lead?: National Conference 2005" 28th February <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e439>>
- "The Next Step: Career Development Group Student Conference" 5th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e440>>
- "Advanced Communities of Practice" 11th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e443>>
- "Marketing Masters Strategy Series" 15th - 17th March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e437>>
- "Market Research on the Web" 23rd March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e420>>

**United States:**

- "ASIDIC Spring 2005 Meeting" 20th - 22nd March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e438>>

**Australia and Territories:**

- "Business Intelligence" 22nd - 23rd March <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e436>>

For your free listing, complete the form at <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.

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The UK organization WRAP, the Waste and Resources Action Programme, <<http://www.wrap.org.uk>> produces a number of useful market research studies. Click on the "Procurement" tab and then choose "Market Research" from the menu, to find out which topics WRAP has been researching. The most recent report is about assessing the market share of recycled content in financial services sector procurement, which you can download for free. Use the simple search box on this page to search for other market research studies.

In Germany, one of the major organizations concerned with recycling of sales packaging materials is Duales System Deutschland AG, whose trademark is the Green Dot, or Gruener Punkt <<http://www.gruener-punkt.de>>. The green dot is printed on over 460 billion pieces of packaging a year and means that the manufacturer of the packaging has already paid a licence fee for the collection, sorting and recycling of its packaging. The website is in English as well as German and contains some good information on why it is so important to separate different types of materials. It also contains a useful dictionary of recycling terms, which you can reach by clicking on the "Dictionary" hyperlink on the home page. The Internet Eco- Guide, which you'll find in the Eco Magazine section lists hyperlinks to more resources, but many of these are German.

Did you know that Nike and Dell have partnerships with the US National Recycling Coalition, a non-profit organization? Read more about Nike's "Reuse-a-Shoe" Partnership and Dell's "No Computer Should Go To Waste" Partnership on the NRC's website at <<http://www.nrc-recycle.org>>. This website has a good resources section, which includes hyperlinks to recycling economic information, waste prevention tools and a professional services directory.

For recent news on the recycling industry, check out <<http://www.recyclingtoday.com>>, a US portal. I read with interest that automotive manufacturer Ford has recently signed a deal in Europe to shred its vehicles.

### Industry information

#### Glass

The Glass Packaging Institute (GPI) <<http://www.gpi.org>> is the voice of the glass container industry in the USA. The institute's website has a good section on recycling, which includes a useful "Teacher's Guide to Glass Container Recycling". This guide is split into material for primary and secondary schools. Many consumers will be aware that recycling points have containers for different colours of glass. The web pages of the GPI explain why separating the different colours is important. Glass manufacturers need recycled glass that has been separated by colour to ensure quality and colour consistency of new containers.

The British Glass Manufacturers' Confederation <<http://www.britglass.org.uk>> is the voice of the glass industry in the UK. To navigate to the section on recycling, click on "Industry", then on

### Jinfo :: Jobs in information

<<http://www.jinfo.com/>>

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies where you can search for and advertise job postings.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published twice-monthly and lists the latest jobs and gives career advice and tips.

Search the database and subscribe to the newsletter at:

<<http://www.jinfo.com/>>

"Recycling". Here you'll find information on the recycling cycle, the glass recycling code and a link to the Glass Recycling Report 2004 in pdf format. The report underlines the fact that the EU's directive on packaging and packaging waste requires the UK to recycle 60% of all glass packaging by 2008. Facts and figures include the number of tonnes of glass recycled in the UK from 1998 to 2004 and glass sector carbon dioxide reductions from 1979 to 2007.

#### Plastic

As consumers we use plastic bottles and containers every day. Many of these containers end up in landfill sites instead of being recycled. To find out more about plastics recycling, a good starting point is the Petcore website <<http://www.petcore.org>>. Petcore is a non-profit European association, whose aim is to foster use and development of PET containers and to facilitate both PET recycling and the development of recycled end materials. Navigate to "PET and the Environment" to find information on sorting and processing, recycled products and the importance of upstream design. Under "PET recycling throughout Europe", you'll find a list of plastics recovery organizations for the major European countries. Many packaging producers have transferred their obligation to recover and dispose of packaging under the EU Directive 2004/12/EC to these recovery organizations.

If your interest is the recycling of plastics found in the different parts of cars, then check out the website of Plastics In End-Of-Life Vehicles at <<http://www.plastics-in-elv.org>> This organization is a network of stakeholders whose aim is to advance the technology and practice of recovery and recycling of end-of-life vehicles. Click on the "Material Recycling" hyperlink to find general and technical papers on automotive plastics recycling. If you want to find out about upcoming events, check out the "News and Events" web page; for example in March 2005 the fifth international automotive recycling congress is taking place in Amsterdam.

The UK's leading authority on plastics waste management is Recoup, <<http://www.recoup.org>>. Recoup's aim is to provide expertise and guidance across the plastics supply, use and disposal chain. The organization has an excellent website packed with useful information, ranging from fact sheets and technical reports, to promotional tools and

educational resources. If you're thinking about developing a plastics collection scheme and are wondering how to go about it, then this is the place to come.

The American Plastics Council <<http://www.plasticsresource.com>> devotes a section of its website to recycling, which you can get to by clicking on the "Recycling and Beyond" hyperlink on the home page. Here you'll find recycling statistics and facts, as well as the 2003 national post-consumer plastics recycling report in pdf format. The report gives detailed statistics on the state of the US plastics recycling industry.

### Aluminium

Aluminium is another material that can be recycled successfully, thus making the best use of energy and natural resources. ALUPRO, the UK aluminium packaging recycling organization's website <<http://www.alupro.org.uk>> is the place to go if you need to find out facts and figures on aluminium recycling in the UK, or if you want to set up a community project to collect aluminium cans as a way of fundraising. To take an informative interactive recycling plant tour, go to <<http://www.aluminiumcanrecycling.com>>, a website run by Novelis Inc, the world's second largest aluminium company.

### Rubber

Automotive rubber tyres are a very valuable resource because their physical and chemical properties mean that they can be 100% recycled. But according to ETRA, the European Tyre Recycling Association <<http://www.etra.eu.com>>, over one billion post-consumer tyres, which could otherwise be recycled, are accumulated in the world each year. ETRA provides useful information on state of the tyre recycling industry in its "Publications" section. Here you'll find the basic facts about tyres, EU tyre disposal routes and a great list detailing the various ways in which tyres can be recycled. Automotive tyres can be used to create sea embankments, sound barriers, artificial reefs, coastal stabilization and - the one I like best of all - antistatic shoe soles.

### Electronic parts

With new electronics products being churned out

at an ever-increasing rate, so the challenge to dispose of and recover the materials becomes more significant. The International Association of Electronics Recycler's website, at <<http://www.iaer.org>> is mainly for members, but there's a good overview of the industry if you click on the "About electronics recycling" hyperlink. More in-depth information on the electronics recycling is in the association's industry report, which can be ordered online. The monthly newsletters are free and contain interesting tidbits on this emerging industry. For example, there's a hyperlink to an article on eBay about the eBay initiative on recycling and refurbishing.

On 13th February 2003, the EU WEEE Directive became law. This directive aims to increase the recycling and recovery of waste equipment. You'll find a pdf copy of the directive on ICER's website at <<http://www.icer.org.uk>>, as well as a directory of WEEE recyclers. ICER is the Industry Council for Electronic Equipment Recycling.

In the USA, the Electronic Industry Alliance has organized a consumer education initiative, at <<http://www.eiae.org>> This is a web-based information resource providing consumers with recycling and reuse information for used electronics. Click on "View National Programs" to locate schemes in different states.

### Conclusion

This article has only scratched the surface of recycling resources on the internet. There are many other useful websites and portals, as this really is a growth industry. Indeed, the OECD estimates that by 2020, we could be generating 45% more waste than we did in 1995 - a frightening thought. If you want to get involved in recycling, start by locating your nearest recycling point. Another good way is to buy products that have been made from recycled materials. Check out <<http://www.recycledproducts.org.uk>> for a comprehensive list. You'll find refuse bags, greetings cards and laser printer paper, all made from recycled materials and available for purchase through distributors. Finally, if you have a bike you no longer need, why not recycle it through <<http://www.re-cycle.org>>? This organization collects second-hand bikes and ships them off to Africa where they are given a new lease of life.

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